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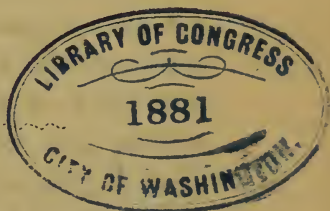
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An Interesting Account

OF A

Visit to Southland College

By STANLEY PUMPHREY.



Mission Work of Indiana Yearly Meeting in the South.

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The traveler on the road from Helena to Forrest City, in the State of Arkansas, after leaving the succession of low, timbered hills, which, at this point, skirt the basin of the Mississippi River, looks down from a wooded slope upon a broad tract of country which has all the marks of fertility. He sees, dotted about, the little cabins of the colored people, through whose toil this space was conquered from the forest, and turned into cotton fields, where they worked as slaves. A mile and a half away, just beyond those tall, bare poles of deadened timber, which indicate that the process of clearing is still going on, are buildings of a more important character. We at once guess what they are. "You will know Southland directly you see it," our

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driver had said, "for it looks quite like a little town." This statement may be received with discount; yet, at this spot, a work of much importance to the colored race has been carried on for many years.

Helena was one among the many points occupied by Friends in the work undertaken by them for the relief and education of the freedmen at the close of the war. Here, in 1864, an orphan asylum was opened by the Missionary Board of Indiana Yearly Meeting, and was placed under the care of Calvin and Alida Clark.

Colonel Bentzoni, who was stationed at Helena, in charge of the Fifty-sixth Colored Infantry, became warmly interested in the institution, and he, together with the officers and troops under him, purchased, at a cost of \$900, thirty acres of land, where the college now stands, and conveyed it in trust to Indiana Yearly Meeting for the benefit of the colored people. To these thirty acres the yearly meeting itself added fifty more. The first buildings at Southland were put up by the soldiers, who, having choice as to whether they should hang about Helena, doing nothing, or work here in the interests of their people, very creditably to themselves chose the latter. Whether Colonel Bentzoni had any idea that the institution he was founding would develop into a college, he selected, in planning the buildings, the form of an open square, after the plan of the English universities. It must be admitted that, with the general arrangement of the buildings, the resemblance ceases, and that no one would be likely to be reminded by these one-storied wooden shanties, with their shingle roofs, of the noble buildings which have been for centuries the glory of Oxford and Cambridge. Three sides of the square stand as they did at first. The northern side is occupied with the dormitories and studyrooms

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of the young men; the eastern side with the diningroom and kitchen; the western with washhouse, etc. The building that stood upon the south, where the superintendent and his wife formerly lived, has been moved to the end of the western wing, and is used for studyrooms for the young women. Its former site is occupied by a three-story frame house, built in 1874, at a cost of \$7,000, with library, office, and receptionrooms on the ground floor, and good bedrooms above, occupied by A. and L. M. Chase and the teachers and girls. In the rear of the northeast are the farm buildings, and between the dwellinghouse and the road is a pleasure garden filled with beautiful flowers. A little to the west stand the school buildings, erected in 1870, at a cost of about \$10,000. Here, on the ground floor, are the rooms occupied respectively by the normal school, the day school, and the elementary department; while, in the upper story, is the room used for public worship and for other meetings, which will comfortably seat about 300; also, two classrooms.

The institution, at its commencement, was an orphan asylum. At the close of the war, large numbers of colored children, who had either been sold themselves or had their parents sold away from them, were left in a pitiable, helpless condition. The government received these, fed them, clothed them, and put them to school till homes could be found for them. In this way 400 passed under the care of Friends at this point alone. At the same time an important educational work was carried on. Large numbers of colored children came simply for schooling, and were taught to read and write. About 2,500 have thus been cared for in addition to the orphans. The number is large, the work having been carried on among a floating population. Had they been more settled, so that a smaller num-

ber of children could have been taught for a longer time, the solid results would have been greater.

In 1868, when the work of the Freedmen's Bureau was closed, and aid was consequently no longer received from the government, the character of the institution changed, and children were not taken in as orphans, except to a very limited extent. Fifteen of the former inmates, who seemed likely to make good teachers, were retained at the expense of Indiana Yearly Meeting. The result was very satisfactory; all have taught schools, and, with the exception of some girls who have married, all are teaching now.

Since 1869, Southland has been the day school for the district, with normal institute attached for the training of teachers. During the last eight years there has been an average of about 200 scholars, with a daily attendance of about 130. The state keeps it open as a free day school for three months. During six months the parents are supposed to pay a dollar a month; but, owing to their poverty, this can rarely be collected.

From forty to fifty who are training as teachers board in the institution. About 100 have gone out as teachers, and about fifty are now engaged as such, chiefly in Arkansas; but also to some extent in the adjoining states of Mississippi and Tennessee. The terms for which their schools are open vary from four to six months, and they are able to earn about fifty dollars per month. Very often, when the term for which they are engaged has expired, they come back to Southland to continue their course of study. Often they can not pay, at the time, the three dollars per week, which is the charge for board, lodging, and tuition, but it is believed there has not been a single instance in which they have not honorably endeavored to pay afterward what was due.

While we were there, a young man, to whose school we paid a very pleasant visit, brought in \$70 to complete the payment of what was due from him two years ago.

Here, as at Hampton, Va., and Maryville, Tenn., they consider it an advantage to the normal school to have the day school attached, inasmuch as they can learn the practice as well as the theory of teaching.

Southland was organized as a college in 1873, and was chartered in 1876, when seven scholars graduated. The course of instruction includes the elements of science, mathematics, and natural history, as well as bookkeeping, German, and Latin. The students are earnestly pressed to complete the simple course which is here required for graduation, and endeavors are made to render the institution more worthy of the title that has been given to it. Perhaps there is no form of benevolence more powerful and wide-reaching in its influences for good than the efficient and religious training of those who are to become the instructors of youth. That this object has been to a large extent successfully achieved at Southland there can be no question. In conversing with the County Inspector of Schools he spoke of the institution in the warmest terms. "We should not know what to do without Southland," he said; "they turn us out the best teachers for the colored people we can get."

The religious work has all along been a very prominent part of the work at Southland. There has been an earnest concern that the scholars should be brought under Christian instruction and influence, and especially has this solicitude been felt for the inmates of the institution. Comparatively few of these have left without giving evidence of conversion to God, and about one hundred have been received into membership in the Society of Friends.

Earnest evangelizing work has been carried on in the district around. As long ago as 1866 the need of religious organization was felt and acknowledged, and twenty-nine orphans and forty others gave their names, with the request that they might be recognized as Southland Meeting in connection with Indiana Yearly Meeting.

George Fox's strong conviction that the religion he preached was as well adapted to the colored and red men as it was to the white, was not at this time generally possessed by the members of the Society he founded, and false notions as to the necessity of maintaining a select respectability hindered Friends from extending the right hand of fellowship to those who were prepared to grasp it eagerly.

It was not till 1868 that seven colored people of Arkansas were received as members, nor until 1870 that Southland was recognized as a Preparative Meeting. Meanwhile other organizations had stepped in to reap the harvest for which Friends had labored, and those who had been on perfectly good terms while we had been drawing fish to their nets, opposed us with sectarian jealousy when they found us drawing to our own.

In 1873 Southland Monthly Meeting was established, and in 1876, a branch meeting was set up at Hickory Ridge, twenty miles further to the West. Here a meeting-house was built and a work done, the practical benefit of which was freely acknowledged by some of the white people of the neighborhood.

Daniel Drew was recorded a minister in 1871, and continues to exercise his gift, much to the edification and comfort of his friends. He and other colored brethren, to whom a gift in the ministry has been committed, are often engaged in religious service among their own people.

Our dear friends, A. and L. M. Chase have given up the most of their time for the last four years to mission work in the South. They make Southland their center, and go out into various parts of Arkansas and Mississippi, holding temperance and gospel meetings, and distributing Bibles and tracts. The service is attended with much hardship. From the white people generally they receive but little countenance, and a few times open opposition, but more often silent contempt; but there are noble exceptions, and a gradual but perceptible change is taking place, as they see the necessity and benefits of education. These Friends often put up with the colored people, and with the more prosperous and thrifty class are comfortably provided for: while with others, though welcome to all they have to offer, it is often only a comfortless abode, and their common fare corn bread and fat pork. The roads, too, are of the worst kind, and from the absence of bridges and the sudden rising of creeks, are often dangerous. Last year, in going to Hickory Ridge, Lydia M. Chase was turned over in Big Creek, and narrowly escaped drowning.

THE VISIT OF E. AND I. BEARD.

We arrived at Southland on the 11th of Fourth month. Elkanah and Irena Beard came the following morning. The latter were welcomed as old friends. Their visits have been frequent, and they have a strong hold on the affections of both teachers and scholars. We did not ourselves come entirely as strangers, for we had met Alida Clark and Amasa and Lydia M. Chase at Western and Indiana Yearly Meetings.

Alida Clark is the moving spirit of the place, and with what earnest enthusiasm she pursues the mission she has

accepted as her life work is well known. With regard to Calvin Clark, it is not too much to say that his services are as indispensable as those of his wife. He takes general oversight of temporal interests of the institution with much practical good sense; manages the farm, keeps accounts, and attends to business matters with a steady perseverance and cheerfulness all the more admirable because the work is, evidently, not one which he would have willingly chosen. Myron H. Thomas, the teacher of the senior class, and Henrietta Kitterell and Emma H. France, teachers of the other departments, are well adapted for the posts they fill. The two last named are young women of color who have been trained at Southland from their childhood.

Sixth day had been fixed for the annual temperance meeting and entertainment, and all day long preparations for it were going forward. Lydia Chase's room, which is usually a hive of industry, was busier than ever, and the sewing machine was in constant requisition, and making double-quick time. In the evening the meetingroom was crowded, the parents and friends of the scholars having come to see and hear the young people. The entertainment was of the most varied character, pieces learnt for the occasion were recited in prose and poetry, and singing, either solo or in company, was liberally interspersed. There were some dialogues and short addresses, and altogether some scores must have taken part. The enthusiasm of the proceedings reached its height when several of the older colored brethren gave us some of their old plantation hymns. One of these, beginning, "Go, Jonah, and preach my gospel," related with much minuteness the history of that disobedient prophet. The blanks in the Scripture narrative were filled up, and Jonah's experience from

the time he went to Joppa till the time he was swallowed by the fish were related with great vividness and force of imagination. The singers were tired by the time they had reached this point in his history, and did not finish it. In another hymn, which was sung with ardor, these words were often repeated :

Reign, oh ! reign, oh ! reign, my Lord,
Reign, Massa Jesus, reign,
Rain, oh ! rain salvation down,
Reign, Massa Jesus, reign ;

and it went on to speak of the blessed indwelling and government of Christ, the Lord. We did not separate till after eleven, and our friends would, no doubt, quite as willingly have stayed till three.

First day, the 14th, was the anniversary of the institution. It was a day that had been looked forward to with eager expectation, and it was a great disappointment that it was ushered in by a violent storm, with thunder and lightning. Some of our company were tempted to think that the elements had got under the dominion of the "Prince of the power of the air ;" but, although our meetings were smaller, they were blessed, and the Spirit, who in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters, was evidently there. In the morning Irena Beard spoke on the history of Eve, and in the evening Stanley Pumphrey preached from "Grow in grace," and Elkanah Beard gave us a striking sermon on Mephibosheth, the poor lame man, who was but a "dead dog" in his own sight, yet who was admitted to David's table as one of the king's sons. The afternoon meeting was more interesting still. It was an experience meeting, and many and heart-felt were the acknowledgments of the Lord's goodness. Old students were there, who had come from their schools

in the country to be present at the anniversary. One had come three hundred miles. Southland is home to them, and it was delightful to see the pleasure with which they mingled with their old associates and teachers. They told us of their difficulties, their labors, and their hopes. Some of them were opposed because they were Quakers, and their efforts in religious instruction and in the promotion of total abstinence were bitterly denounced. One of them was told by a director that he must give up using the Bible in school, but he replied that he would rather give up his post, and his constancy gained the day. Others expressed their desire to grow stronger and stronger in the Lord, that they might be of more use to their people, and entered into covenant to serve God more faithfully. "I want to be a better man," said one noble young fellow, "and to live nearer to Christ, for I can not be thankful enough for all he has done for me." "It was a great blessing," said another, "that I was cast under the influence of this institution." "While many of my old associates," said a third, "have been sent to the penitentiary, I, who was brought here, have found the Lord Jesus Christ." Some were teaching Sabbath schools, and were able to tell of the conversion of their pupils. I think it was on another occasion that we had a remarkable testimony from an elderly colored woman, whose deportment had the dignity and refinement that true religion alone can give. Her life had been an uncommon one. A skillful dressmaker, she had earned enough to purchase her own freedom and that of one of her children. She was imprisoned at Charleston by the confederates at the commencement of the war, because, in an intercepted letter sent to her son, who was serving under Major Anderson at Fort Sumter, she had said that she was praying

daily for his preservation, and that of his commanding officer. "I entered," she told us, "on the ship Zion thirty years ago, and am noways tired. The Lord has been very good to me. He has delivered me out of all my afflictions. When I was hungry he fed me; when I was naked he clothed me; when I was in trouble he comforted me. O! what would the world be without Jesus. Had I a thousand tongues I could not speak enough in my dear Redeemer's praise."

Our presence was not allowed to interfere with the ordinary school exercises. At five o'clock the bell rang, and at six we sat down to breakfast. The scholars stand round the table while they sing a verse or two of some familiar hymn, previous to the thanksgiving pause. After breakfast the Bible is handed to Calvin Clark. "Have you any choice?" he said, as he turned to us. "Yes," said Elkanah, "I should like the Epistle of James; I want to hear about a religion that teaches us *to do*." So for five mornings we had the practical teachings of the Apostle of Works. Short exhortations were given each morning by one or more of us, enforcing the lessons of the chapter read, and the call of the Spirit to vocal prayer was gladly responded to.

After breakfast the girls have their household duties to attend to, for this is part of their education, and habits of neatness and order are inculcated. At 8.30 the bell rings for school, the first half hour being devoted to religious exercises. There was singing, followed by both silent and vocal prayer, and the Holy Scriptures were read and expounded. The children showed good attention and answered questions well. "What does Jesus mean when he says 'Ye are the light of the world'?" "He means," said a little lad, "that Christians should do right, so that

sinner's may follow their example." School lasts till twelve, and then there is recess for dinner and recreation till 1.30, the afternoon session closing at 4. Supper is at 6.30, and then at eight each evening we had our meeting. It is scarcely surprising that after days so long and fully occupied there was "a little appearance of drowsiness." The wonder was that it was not exhibited in a much larger number. Usually, however, after a short nap at the beginning of a meeting, and the singing of one or two hymns, the congregation woke up and continued awake. The meetings were varied in their character. We thought it right to give a good deal of direct religious teaching. One evening the subject of sanctification was before us and the hearers were asked to search out in their Bibles and read aloud a number of texts bearing upon it. On another occasion the judgment to come and the teaching of the Bible on heaven and hell was brought out in the same way. Another evening our lesson was taken from Jer. vii: 21-28. The words "obey my voice," and "they went backward and not forward," being dwelt upon as the special key notes of the lesson. The interest of the meetings increased night after night, and by the close of the week many were seeking the pardon of their sins, and others had renewed their covenants. During the daytime we had many private interviews, both with the anxious and the unconcerned, spent considerable time in the classes and called on some of the people of the neighborhood.

One afternoon Stanley Pumphrey gave the scholars a lecture on England, and Elkanah Beard set them in roars of laughter by his graphic description of the way bread and butter are made in Hindoostan.

On First day, the 21st, there was a large attendance at all the meetings. Elkanah Beard spoke from "Fair as the

moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," and set forth what the church ought to be, and how it would ride on triumphant round the world. In the afternoon he and his wife related their remarkable deliverance from shipwreck, and in the evening he preached again. The power of the Lord was manifest, and as soon as he had finished inquirers began to come forward of their own accord, earnestly seeking the forgiveness of sins. Christians went round among the congregation to persuade others to come, and soon thirty or forty were kneeling at the platform, and some were crying for mercy. Several were soon made happy and testified of the blessing they had received. One young man for whom much prayer had been offered came forward and found himself kneeling by the side of another with whom he had a long-standing quarrel. He got up and turned away, but when meeting was about to close he asked leave to say a few words, when, turning to his former enemy, he said: "I have been mad with you for two months, and I can not pray to God till you forgive me. Will you?" The other said "Yes." They shook hands, and were reconciled.

Stanley Pumphrey and Amasa Chase went over on Seventh day, 20th, to Hickory Ridge, where there is another meeting of colored Friends. We had had a succession of violent thunderstorms, and the heavy rains swelled the creeks so that the railroad was under water for long distances together and it nearly reached the bottom of the cars. We had good and well-attended meetings on First day, and the interest was such that it appeared to us right to continue the meetings for a few days. Amasa Chase went home on Second day and sent up reinforcements, viz: Lydia M. Chase, S. G. Pumphrey, Isabella Chatters, and four of the students. Soon after their arrival a tremendous storm

set in, and very few could get out to meeting. All night long the blaze of the lightning and roar of the thunder were incessant, and the rain came down in torrents unusual even in this southern latitude. In the morning we found to our dismay that we were prisoners. All the bridges of the country had been washed away in the flood of last year, and only the smaller ones had been replaced; the fords were no longer fordable, and the railroad bridges were so injured that they would not be safe to cross till the waters had subsided so as to allow of repairing them. We waited day after day with admirable patience on the part of some of our number, and with feelings approaching the reverse on the part of the rest. The poor girls who had come to help us longed to get home to their studies. Southland never looked more attractive than when they could not reach it, and they said the last star would fall from heaven before they would again visit Hickory Ridge. I confess to having experienced a very keen sympathy with them myself. We held a meeting each night with the colored people who were summoned to the meetinghouse by the ringing of the bell. Very few white people came, and our efforts to see them by themselves were not successful. The first evening we appointed a meeting with them the thunderstorm was gathering; the second a trifling excuse was found for setting it aside, and on the third not a woman was present, and only about twenty men and children. We had gone to the colored people first and they were no more disposed to receive us than were the Samaritans to receive our Master when "his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem." And yet at Hickory Ridge a better feeling has been manifested toward our friends than at any point where they have worked. On Fifth day we received the information that the cars were at Poplar Grove four miles

off, and would start at 7.30 in the morning with the prospect of getting through to Helena. We rose at 5 A. M. and were off betimes, a benevolent Englishman lending us his wagon; but on reaching Poplar Grove, lo, the cars had gone the night before and were waiting five miles off at Barton. Big Creek lay between us and Barton, and this stream in its present condition we could not ford. There was nothing for us but to walk, and cross the railroad bridge which happily was standing. When we reached Barton the cars were there and seemed likely to remain there for some days. Men were at work on the bridge below, but the water was still high. An enterprising Missourian had, however, made a rough boat since the flood set in, and in that we crossed. We sent on our young men to Southland, and late in the evening their team came to meet us and we reached home safely, our friends almost as glad to see us as we to meet them.

We found the good work had been going on well in our absence. The interest had deepened and many had found peace. One night the Christian students rose at two and continued in prayer till five with those who were anxious. The concluding meetings on First day were well attended. In the morning Stanley Pumphrey preached from the parable of the Sower. In the afternoon, by special request, he gave some teaching on the principles of Friends getting the students to search out in their Bibles the proof passages. In the evening he spoke from the words, "The day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision," urging an immediate surrender on the part of those who were still holding back. Irena Beard and S. G. Pumphrey also gave parting addresses. An opportunity was given for the converts to state what church they would wish to join, and we stayed till a late hour in conversation and prayer with those who



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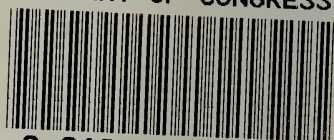
were still seeking the forgiveness of all the students and other members of the household assembled on the porch to bid us farewell. As we drove off they were singing "In the sweet bye and bye, we shall meet on that beautiful shore," and it was not easy to keep back our tears.

In conclusion I wish to bespeak for Southland the continued interest and support of Friends. No missionary work more important in character or fruitful in results is being carried on by our members. A good start has been made; but the work is only in its infancy. Withdraw the support that has been given, and much of the good already done will get scattered; sustain it well, and the work will go on with increased momentum. With more means at their command our Friends could readily enlarge their field of work. This is also the case in the missionary work of Amasa and Lydia M. Chase, to whom scarcely any help has been given the past two years. The \$30 raised for them in the Indiana Women's Yearly Meeting last year was at once expended by Lydia M. Chase in tracts. At the present time the institution is greatly needing a new diningroom, kitchen, and new dormitories and study room for the young men, the temporary buildings erected by the soldiers, which are still occupied, being now past repair. The probable cost will be from \$3,000 to \$4,000, of which \$1,000 is promised provided the rest can be raised. Contributions in aid will be gladly received by Joseph Dickinson, Richmond, Indiana, Secretary of the Missionary Board, or by Calvin Clark, Helena, Arkansas.

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